



A
LETTER
of D^r. REINOLDS
to his friend, concerning
his aduice for the studie
of *Diuinitie*.

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¶ A Letter of Doctor
Reinolds to his friend concer-
ning his aduice for the study
of Diuinity. &c.

I Must request you
to impute to my
businesses, which
haue diuerse
waies troubled me, not to
lacke of good will, my slack-
nesse is not hitherto answer-
ing your letters. Which as-
sure your selfe, if I had been
able, I would haue sooner
answered, so much the more
willingly, the better I liked
of them, as being sure wit-
nesses of your good will to

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me ward, and desire of god-
linesse: whereof for the one
I haue heartily to thank you;
for the other greatly to re-
ioice with you. Then to shew
my iudgement concerning
the order which you may
best follow in the study of
diuinity, I can tell you no-
thing but that you haue al-
ready better read in others
and doe know your selfe.
Howbeit to satisfie your lo-
uing request, I will briefly
mention the chiefeſt points
in my iudgement, which are
to be regarded: which if you
well conſider, and earnestly
doe follow, as I truſt you
will, and God grant you
may, your labour ſhall be ta-
ken

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ken to the advancement of
Gods glory, the profit of his
Church, & your own comfort

The chiefeſt point of all, to
begin withis, ſith that diuini-
ty, the knowledge of God,
is the water of life; the veſſell
muſt be cleane that ſhall re-
ceiue ſo precious a liquor:
the houſe muſt be clenſed
that ſhal haue Gods holy ſpi-
rit, not only a gueſt, but alſo
a continual dweller in it. God
forbid you ſhould thinke di-
uinity conſiſts of words, as
wood doth of trees, diuinity
without godlineſſe doth but
condemne conſciences a-
gainſt the day of vengeance,
and prouoke the wrath of
the mighty Lord, and make

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more inexcusable before the
seat of iudgement. I will not
ad, that true diuinity cannot
be learned, vnlesse we frame
our hearts and minds wholly
to it. But I will desire you to
consider that, only, that as
the Poet saith, *Symcrum est
nisi vas, quodcumq; in fundis a-
cesssit*: so it is written in the
book of Wisedome, *Wisedom
cannot enter into the heart of
a wicked man, nor dwell in a bo-
dy that is subiect vnto sinne.*
I hope there is no great cause
of standing vpon this point,
when I write vnto you, who
are, as I trust, the chosen of
God, and therefore appoin-
ted also to be sanctified. Yet
sith your selfe haue mentio-
ned

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ned vnto me your owne remisse kind of liuing (as you doe terme it;) as you loue me, take heed that this remissenesse be not the same in a mans mind, which a *παράλογος* is in the body. And in this, to conclude, consider with your selfe, that if the heathens at their sacrifices were wont to cry out, *Procul ô procul este profani*: what study of holinesse ought there to be in vs, whom God hath adopted, Christ hath redeemed, the holy Ghost hath sanctified to be a peculiar people vnto God, zealous of good works: which if it be required at the hands of all christians, what shal be asked

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at theirs, who studying diuinity to instruct others, should shine themselves as lights in the midst of a lewd generation? Shall he euer perswade others to embrace godlinesse, that hath not perswaded himselfe that it is a pearle to be redeemed with all treasures?

For the study it selfe, which is next to be considered, the knowledge of God must be learned of God, if euer it be learned. Of whom that we may learne it, we haue to vse two meanes, prayers and reading of holy scripture. Prayers, our selues to talke with God; reading, to heare God talke with vs. For, because

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cause without the grace of the holy spirit, all study, especially in divinity, is vaine: therefore we must earnestly desire of God that he will enlighten our minds, and soften our hearts, both to know and follow his will revealed to vs. Now because the holy spirit doth teach the same doctrine which our Saviour did, which is set forth vnto vs in the Law, and the Prophets, and the Euangelists: therefore we must diligently giue our selues to reading and meditating of the holy scriptures in tongues in which they were written by the holy Spirit. Which how much more forcible it

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is then to be doubtfull among translations, if *S. Austin* did not show, who instructeth a christian preacher that the knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek tongues is very necessary to vnderstand the old and new testament: yet *Themistocles* might shew, who hauing to speake to the king of Persia, was afraid that his minde would not be perceiued by interpreters, and therefore requested the king to grant him first a yeeres space to learne the Persian tongue. Wherefore I wish that you also ioyned Hebrew to your Greeke, though peradventure you haue once began it,
and

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and giuen it ouer. For in that you may follow me, sith you propose my example, so much the better, who my selfe, when I was first Master of Arts, began the study of it, and being weary, left it: the next yeer perceiuing the necessary vse of it, I set againe vpon it, and I thanke God, since continued a student in it. Wherefore the word of God, and that, if it may be, out of the very wel-spring, not out of the brooks of translations (if I may so tearme them) must be diligently read, and by often reading made familiar vnto vs, though it be not in all places throughly vnderstood

as

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as the same *Austin* hath very well noted. As for the parts of scripture (besides this continuall reading of the whole) to be read first ouer with more diligence then the rest, I will giue you the same counsell which I heard of Doctor *Villerius* giuen to yong students, that first you take your greatest trauaile with the helpe of some learned interpreter, in vnderstanding S. Iohns Gospell and the Epistle to the Romans, the summe of the new Testament: *Esay* the Prophet, and the Psalmes of *Dauid*, the summe of the old. Howbeit in the rest, you shall doe well also if in harder places

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ces you vse the iudgement
of some godly writer, as *Cal-*
nin and *Peter Martyr*, who
haue written best on the
most part of the old Testa-
ment. And because it is expe-
dient to ioine the reading
of some compend of scrip-
tures and summe of all diui-
nity, together with the scrip-
tures, I would wish you to
trauaile painfully in *Calvins*
Institution of Christian Re-
ligion, whereby you shall be
greatly profited not only to
the vnderstanding of the
scriptures, wherof it is a bricf
and learned commentary:
but also to the perceiving of
points of doctrine, whither
all things doe pertaine, and
may

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may of vs be applied. Of farther reading of Doctors and histories & other treatises of religiō, I wil not adde at this present: we may hereafter (if God will) at greater leisure, when these things are done which must bee laid for the foundatiō, more conueniētly talk. Howbeit, if sometimes to recreate your selfe, you intermingle with grauer studies the reading ouer of the history Ecclesiasticall, especially as it is written more for our country by good M. Fox, you shal receiue of it, together with great profit, great delectatiō.

I had almost forgotten your two last points, *Quæ ratio annotandi, Quæ exercitatio adhibenda,*

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benda, I haue so little to say of them. For touching noting, you know I do not like the cōmon custom of common places. The best in my iudgemēt, is to note in the margēt or in some paper booke for that purpose, the summe and method of that which you read. As for examples sake, *M. Bunnie* hath done very wel in *Caluins* Institutions, shewing all his method and sum of euery sectiō, in his *Compēdio* &c. which book you may wel ioyn with the reading of *Caluin*, to vnderstand his order & method the better. For the other, which is exercising, it wil be good somtimes to occupie your pen either
at

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at large or briefly, as you list,
of such godly meditations as
the reading of the scriptures
shall offer vnto you ; praiers
vnto God, reproof of sin,
commending of godlinesse,
exhorting to righteousness,
dehorting frō iniquity, con-
solation in miseries, confir-
ming of the truth, refuting of
heresies, & taking an occasi-
on of doing these things som-
times to other of your friends
(a lively and godly exercise,)
whereby you may profit
them, or your self at the least.
If you cannot find such oc-
casions to others , I pray
write to mee sometime of
doubtes that you may find,
or whatsoeuer you list, and

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I will acknowledge my selfe
in that respect as in others,
beholding to you.

Now if God giue you grace,
as earnestly to follow these
things, as you have been de-
sirous that I should prescribe
them; you see the learning of
the Hebrew tongue, the rea-
ding of the scriptures, of lear-
ned interpreters, of the sum
of religion, of noting what
you read, and your exercise
therin, these things require
much time, & a mind attent;
to speak nothing of prayers,
and the study of godlinesse,
which will also require some
meditation. *Laborandum, mi
Iohannes, non luxuriandum.*
You know what Tullie saith
for

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for *Calius*, that to the bare
attaining of eloquence *omit-
tenda sunt omnes voluptates,
relinquenda studia delectationis
iocus, ludus, conuiuium, sermo
pene familiarium deferendus.*
You know what *Plato* saith
of his Philosopher, what a
great φιλόσοφος and φιλόσοφος he
would haue him, if euer he
shall be admitted a man wor-
thy to gouerne his city. If
eloquence, if philosophie re-
quire such trauaile for ciuill
and base things (in this com-
parison:) what shall we think
that the knowledge of God,
the study of diuinity, desireth
for the greatnesse, & for the
worthines deserueth. Whe-
ther you will take such pains
or

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or no, or whether you will fly
al entisemēts from it, I donot
know; I pray God you may.
Surely hitherto, which I write
with grieve, (your writing, &
your friendship doth embol-
den me to write freely that
which I trust you will take in
good part) you haue bin too
much caried away by means
of cōpany, from earnest tra-
uaile to your study, to sweet
intisemēts of the flesh, seeing
of vain spectacles, ouermuch
eating & drinking, banquet-
ing, frequēting of the town,
deliting in vanity, resorting
to tauerne, forgetting the
word of God. *Be not filled with
wine wherein is exces but be filled
with the spirit.* Wil you pardon
my loue for desiring to heale

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you, or shall I become your enemy for speaking of the truth?) they haue made you to neglect your profit in study, they haue hurt your wit, weakned your memory, corrupted your good desire, stained your manners, enfeebled your body, toucht your good name, griued your friends, and indeed almost quenched, but yet I thāk God they haue not put out the lively sparks of Gods spirit in you. A great welwiller of yours, though not greatly acquainted with you, did ask me a day or two before the act, since I receiu'd your letters, what I thought of you, as one that did hartily desire your profit in learning

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ning & godlines. When I had answered him, for that good opinion which I had alwaies cōceiued of you, both alwaies for your towardlinesse, and especially for your letters, so friendly that I will not now report: he said that he was very glad to heare it, & that he asked the question in some doubt, because in few daies that here he had staid, he had seen you somewhat often in the town. But it might be that by reason of strāgers you had som occasion, the Iudges being here, to be the oftner abroad. Howbeit about & since the same time, to absent your self from prayers, an exercise so necessary for christiāns, that
indeed

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indeed desire & grace of God,
and know it comes from him
only, to absent your self from
sundry exercises of diuinity,
wherein peradventure some
good might haue bin done to
the furthering of your study:
me think these things did not
so well as I wished, agree with
the profession & as it were
protestatiō, which in your let-
ters, so shortly before you
writ to me. I may seem ouer-
bold, & perhaps am too sharp
in this my dealing with you,
agreeing as some may think,
rather to one that were a su-
perior, then fit for a friend,
whose degree & state is equal.
But I know not how, the good
will which I did bear, first be-
ing

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ing reader to you being scholar, and euer since continued with my free aduise in all things wherein euer you haue asked my counsel (as, I thank you, you haue done in many) doth constrain me to poue foorth my inward affection to you, so much the more willingly, because I know you haue learned of *Salomon*, that *the wounds of a friend are beter then the kissings of an enemy*. Euen these things that hinderyour study, & therefore at your request I was constrained to touch, I haue touched the more boldly, because I do not doubt but your selfe do mislike them: & I see in your letters the strife betwixt the flesh and the spirit, which S.

Paul

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Paul setteth down as a marke of Gods children, that you do not the good which you wold but the euill which you wold not, that you do. God giue you grace to stir vp your hart & strue as a faithfull seruāt to fly from the lusts of youth, as *S. Paul* exhorteth *Timothy*, that you may set your mind to praiers & the reading of holy scripture. It wil be cōueniēt that you haue your appointed times for the one and for the other. Which to prescribe as your self knowing your own busines, may most conueniētly; so cōstātly to follow your order prescribed, I hope the grace of God, which earnestly you shall pray for, will not be failing to you. *Iuly 4. 1577*

FINIS.

